United Nations A/68/PV.2

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Friday, 20 September 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Item 7 of the provisional agenda** (*continued*)

**Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items**

**First report of the General Committee (A/68/250)**

**The President**: May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the General Committee. In that section, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly to now direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, the rationalization of work, the opening and closing dates for the session, the schedule of meetings, the general debate and the conduct of the meetings, et cetera.

In paragraph 20, the General Committee draws to the attention of the Assembly the fact that the general debate will be held from Tuesday, 24 September to Tuesday, 1 October, and recommends that it continue on Saturday, 28 September 2013. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the information contained in paragraph 20 and approves the recommendation that the general debate continue on Saturday, 28 September 2013?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: All other recommendations in section II of the report of the Committee concern established practice. Therefore, rather than going through them one by one, I believe it would be beneficial to address all of those organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that it is requested to take note of and to approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in section II of the report?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Having just adopted the recommendation in paragraph 18 on waiving the requirements of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to declare a meeting open, I should like to endorse the practical suggestion that has been made at previous sessions that each delegation designate someone to be present in the meeting rooms at the scheduled time, unlike this morning.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 43 concerning the timely submission of draft proposals for the review of their programme budget implications?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: May I now invite members to turn their attention to section III of the report, which deals with the adoption of the agenda. The question of the allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section IV.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-48105 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

In section III, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 51 to 56.

In paragraph 57, in connection with sub-item (j) of item 19 of the draft agenda, entitled "The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading A, entitled "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 58, in connection with item 39 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security", on the understanding that there would be no consideration of the item by the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 59, in connection with item 54 of the draft agenda, entitled "Comprehensive review of special political missions", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 60, in connection with item 61 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", the General Committee decided to recommend that consideration of that item be deferred to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 61, in connection with sub-item (d) of item 132 of the draft agenda, entitled "United Nations Capital Development Fund", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 62, in connection with item 125 of the draft agenda, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters", on the understanding that the General Committee would further consider and revert to the proposal made by the Russian Federation during its 1st meeting, held on 18 September. I have consulted with the General Committee and understand that there is agreement on the following proposal in relation to the consideration of item 125:

> "The consideration of the review of civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict, under item 125 of the draft agenda, in plenary meeting shall take place only after the Fifth Committee, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Commission have had an opportunity to consider the question."

May I take it that the Assembly approves that proposal?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 63, in connection with item 171 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 64, in connection with item 172 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the International Anti-Corruption Academy in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 65, in connection with item 173 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for

the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In paragraph 66, in connection with item 174 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Global Green Growth Institute in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to the agenda recommended by the General Committee in paragraph 67 of its report for adoption by the General Assembly, taking into account the decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agenda.

Bearing in mind that the agenda is organized under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole. I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 and 2 have already been dealt with. We shall now turn to items 3 to 8. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences". May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to heading B, "Maintenance of international peace and security". May I take it that the items listed under heading B are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

**Mr. Nazarian** (Armenia): My delegation wishes to state that we dissociate ourselves from the consensus to include item 38 in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

**The President**: Next, we turn to heading C, "Development of Africa". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Now we come to heading D, "Promotion of human rights". May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Heading E is entitled "Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Next, we turn to heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law". May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Now we turn to heading G, "Disarmament". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Lastly, we turn to heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 68 to 70. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 70 concerning the granting of observer status?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 72 to 78. We shall take up the recommendations one by one. Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 67 of the report before us, namely document A/68/250.

We turn first to paragraphs 72 (a) to (j), which relate to a number of plenary items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 72 (a) to (j)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We now turn to paragraph 73, which relates to item 99, "General and complete disarmament".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 73?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to paragraph 74, which relates to item 54, "Comprehensive review of special political missions" of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee). May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 74?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to paragraph 75, which relates to sub-item (j) of item 19, "The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia", under the Second Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 75?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to paragraphs 76 (a) to (c), which relate to sub-item (d) of item 131, "United Nations Capital Development Fund"; item 135, "Programme planning"; and item 143, "Administration of justice at the United Nations", of the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 76 (a) to (c)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to paragraphs 77 (a) to (d), which relate to item 170, "Observer status for the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law in the General Assembly"; item 171, "Observer status for the International Anti-Corruption Academy in the General Assembly"; item 172, "Observer status for the Pan African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa in the General Assembly"; and item 173, "Observer status for the Global Green Growth Institute in the General Assembly", of the Sixth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 77 (a) to (d)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We shall now turn to paragraph 78 of the report of the General Committee on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Main Committee.

I first turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for plenary meetings?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We come next to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the First Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Second Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Third Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Lastly, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation. Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See, in its capacity as an Observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 58/314, of 1 July 2004, and the note by the SecretaryGeneral contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974; 43/177, of 15 December 1988; 52/250, of 7 July 1998; and 67/19, of 29 November 2012, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

In addition, I would like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 65/276, of 3 May 2011, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, representatives of the European Union will participate in the work of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

**Agenda items 14 and 118**

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields**

**Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit**

**Draft resolution (A/68/L.2)**

**The President**: Members are reminded that the debate on agenda item 14 and agenda item 118 will be held jointly with sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 124, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system", and agenda item 125, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", on 28 October.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.2, entitled "Review of the implementation of

General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Botnaru** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/68/L.2, entitled "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council", I wish to put on record the following statement on financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

By paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide that the arrangements contained in the draft resolution and its annex would be reviewed at the seventy-second session.

Paragraphs 4, 5 and 16 of the annex state that the arrangements set forth in the annex should not lead to an increase in the number of meeting days currently provided for the Economic and Social Council. The Council shall adjust its programme of work to a July-to-July cycle with immediate effect, and is invited to consider transitional arrangements for the election of its Bureau, taking into account the relevant rules, regulations and practices with regard to the work of the Council, its subsidiary bodies and United Nations funds and programmes. The Council shall hold its regular meetings in New York, with the humanitarian affairs segment continuing to alternate between New York and Geneva. On an ad hoc and cost-effective basis, another United Nations location could be decided upon if that would contribute to a better discussion on the chosen main theme.

Pursuant to the changes in the programme of work of the Economic and Social Council contained in the various provisions of draft resolution A/68/L.2 and its annex, and in view of paragraphs 4 and 5 of the annex, it is the understanding of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management that the Economic and Social Council would not need additional meetings beyond what is currently being provided for the Council. Therefore, there will be no implications on the meetings workload for the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. However, given that the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2014-2015 has already been prepared and the Economic and Social Council secretariat is not able to specify the timing and modalities of the Council's meetings, at this time it is difficult to determine the feasibility of those meetings vis-à-vis the meetings capacity of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Therefore, the dates of the Economic and Social Council meetings will have to be determined in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

With regard to paragraph 16 of the annex of draft resolution A/68/L.2, should the Economic and Social Council hold its meeting at another United Nations location, the implications for the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management will depend on the availability of conference servicing staff at that location. If they are not available, additional costs such as travel and daily subsistence allowance for conference-servicing staff sent from other duty stations will constitute additional requirements. Therefore, when making a specific decision to hold its meeting at another United Nations location, the additional financial implications would be taken into consideration by the Economic and Social Council.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/68/L.2, the Secretary-General will submit details of financial implications, if applicable, in accordance with the established procedures when the modalities of the meeting are determined.

**The President**: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position before taking action on the draft resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

**Mr. Seger** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, Sir, as this is the first time I take the floor, to congratulate you warmly upon your election to serve as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I promise that I will definitely keep my remarks to less than 10 minutes.

People are ever more aware that the challenges of the future cannot be tackled in our interconnected and globalized world without a systematic vision and the genuine participation of all of us, from North and South, East and West, alike. This awareness is acting as a catalyst for rapid and profound change, including

within the United Nations. Today we are witnessing changes following the Economic and Social Council reform process and the intense negotiations that carried on for several months. We would like to view that as an encouraging sign for the even more intense negotiations awaiting us on the post-2015 development agenda, in which we hope to see an inclusive sustainable development overcome the old dichotomy that characterizes the current development architecture.

Switzerland shares the opinion of many delegations that the Economic and Social Council has not always made the most of its potential in the past and that it could fulfil its mandate in a more efficient and effective way. That is why Switzerland has been and remains determined to making the Council stronger, more efficient and more relevant.

From the outset, Switzerland has supported several reform proposals, including the definition of annual themes, better coordination between the Council and the General Assembly in order to avoid any overlap, streamlined reporting from its committees, and strengthened participation for all stakeholders, especially non-governmental organizations.

An essential function of the Council is to monitor the implementation of decisions relating to the operational role of the United Nations system. Any reform of the Council must therefore aim to strengthen that key role. Important United Nations processes, such as the review of the United Nations development system through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, have a direct impact on United Nations bodies, including the specialized international organizations based in Geneva. Geneva hosts the headquarters of leading international organizations in the areas of health, trade, labour, human rights and humanitarian affairs and serves as a global platform for environmental issues. All of those issues are essential to the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council. Disconnecting the governing bodies of those institutions from the monitoring of strategic decisions risks having a negative impact on the United Nations development system and alienating the Geneva-based United Nations institutions.

In our view, the reform should have brought the Council closer to the actors on the ground and to the main beneficiaries of its actions. We fear that the reform has rather the opposite effect, with the Council being seen as an ever more distant organization. We also doubt that the Council would be strengthened if it could no longer count, in the course of its deliberations, on the expertise of the wide variety of civil society organizations based in Geneva that work on issues that are key for the Council. Moreover, if the operational segment is to take pace in February, we frankly do not see how the Secretariat will have time to collect the data needed for Member States to monitor the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. We hope that the Secretariat will find a way of managing that.

We understand that a key argument for stopping the alternation between New York and Geneva, with the exception of the humanitarian segment and the transition day, is that of associated costs. Switzerland is not convinced that splitting up the different segments throughout the calendar year will be any more cost-effective than having the roughly two-week-long humanitarian and operational segment directly followed by the high-level week, which would alternate between New York and Geneva.

It is for those reasons that Switzerland remains sceptical with regard to the results of the reform. We do not know if there will be any true strengthening in practice of the Economic and Social Council and the operational system of the United Nations. Moreover, Switzerland is not convinced of the cost-saving effect of this measure. However, given the general feeling prevailing in the Hall and to show our commitment to a common cause, we do not want to block this undertaking, aware that it is just the first step leading to more profound reform of the Council, which will have to learn how to interact with the General Assembly in the future, not least through the newly established High-level Political Forum.

**The President**: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position prior to taking action on the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.2, entitled "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.2?

*Draft resolution A/68/L.2 was adopted* (resolution 68/1).

**The President**: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position following the adoption of resolution 68/1, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

**Mrs. Mørch Smith** (Norway): As we accelerate our efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and prepare for a new sustainable development agenda after 2015, the improvements to the Economic and Social Council we have agreed to will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to drive those efforts. The reformed Economic and Social Council will give us a better platform and framework that will make the United Nations' work on sustainable development issues more effective and efficient.

We expect the reformed Council to become a highly relevant and attractive venue for policy debate. We want to see broad, high-level engagement on the part of Governments and the United Nations system, as well as civil society and other stakeholders. We want the Economic and Social Council to be a key arena for driving the implementation of the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda. Norway would like to thank the co-facilitators, Ambassadors Talbot and Frankinet, and their teams for their dedication, wisdom and patience in conducting the process that has led to today's decision.

**The President**: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union, who wishes to make a statement following the adoption of resolution 68/1.

**Ms. Kaljulate** (European Union): The European Union and its member States wish to thank the co-facilitators, Ambassador Frankinet of Belgium and Ambassador Talbot of Guyana, their teams and the Secretariat for all their efforts in the process that led to the adoption of resolution 68/1. It has been a long process, and we are grateful for their leadership and perseverance. The Economic and Social Council is a principal organ of the United Nations and of great importance to us. We trust that the resolution will improve its effectiveness, inclusiveness and responsiveness to today's challenges.

The Economic and Social Council has seen many reforms over the years. While we would have gone further in certain areas and taken different approaches in others, we are still convinced that the resolution adopted today promises to significantly improve the work and results of the Council. It will now be incumbent upon all of us, including the President of the Council and its Bureau, to ensure that this promise becomes a reality. Just as we believe today's resolution will enable the Council to become more efficient, we also trust that cost effectiveness will remain a priority, including with respect to the resolution, which we believe does not entail any budgetary implications.

**The President**: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 14 and 118.

## Agenda item 125

## United Nations reform: measures and proposals

### Draft resolution (A/68/L.3)

**The President**: Members are reminded that the debate on agenda item 125 will be held on 20 October jointly with agenda item 14, entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields"; agenda item 118, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit; and sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 124, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system".

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.3, entitled "Extension of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Botnaru** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/68/L.3, entitled "Extension of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system", I wish to put on record the following statement on financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

By paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to

provide a comprehensive and detailed cost assessment to provide background context to support the intergovernmental process by 15 November 2013, based on, but not limited to, the report of the co-facilitators.

It is the understanding of the Secretary-General that the requested comprehensive and detailed cost assessment would be prepared in the format of a note/background paper, in English only, without editing or translation into all languages by conference services. The note/background paper would be submitted to the President of the General Assembly, who would then forward it to Member States under the cover of his respective letter, which would receive an official document number for future reference.

It is expected that the note/background paper would contain detailed information on a number of costing issues, including the cost of the current system, including for conference services and documentation, as well as the additional resources required to clear the current backlog, and the unit cost of each element of the treaty body system. On the basis of that information, preliminary estimates of the practical and financial implications of measures proposed in the context of the intergovernmental process and recommended in the report of the co-facilitators, which was transmitted to the General Assembly by the note of the President of the General Assembly contained in document A/67/995, would be further prepared. All possible efforts would be made in order to submit the note/background paper, containing the requested assessment, to the President of the General Assembly by 15 November 2013.

Similarly, all possible efforts would be made to meet the additional workload resulting from the request in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution from within existing resources available under the respective budget sections of the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/68/L.3, no additional appropriation would be sought from the General Assembly with regard to the requests contained in the draft resolution.

**The President**: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position before we take action on the draft resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Khan** (Indonesia): I make this statement on behalf of Iceland and Indonesia, the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system at the Assembly's sixty-seventh session.

Allow me to begin by reiterating our sincere appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for the trust and honour afforded us and our countries in facilitating such an important intergovernmental process. We would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for facilitating the process's smooth transition to the sixty-eighth session. Despite the delay in adopting the draft text before us, we are very pleased that the draft procedural resolution (A/68/L.3) is now before us for adoption.

As mandated in resolution 66/295, we have been tasked with conducting open, transparent and inclusive negotiations on how to strengthen and enhance the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. We have therefore held formal and informal meetings with Member States, and numerous thematic and informal consultations and discussions with other relevant stakeholders, including meetings with the Chairs of the treaty bodies and video-teleconference meetings with treaty body experts and representatives of civil society. Throughout the various consultations with Member States, we have felt a strong sense of commitment, cooperation and compromise, which we believe will serve as a good platform for moving the process forward at the sixty-eighth session.

We have also received a variety of inputs and contributions from various relevant stakeholders, namely, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, treaty body experts, national human rights institutions and civil society. We take this opportunity to thank them for sharing their expertise, which has undoubtedly enriched the discussions on the matter.

Despite significant progress during the session, especially towards identifying various concrete and sustainable measures needed for the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the work of the intergovernmental process requires additional work before it can be concluded. As is the case with any intergovernmental process, differing views and interests have been raised throughout our deliberations thus far. However, we fervently hope that we will be able to achieve an outcome that reflects

the consensus, contributes to the enhancement of the human rights treaty bodies, and supports the promotion and protection of human rights at the country level.

In that regard, the draft resolution contained in document A/68/L.3 requires that the work of that process be extended until the first half of February 2014 in order to finalize the elaboration of an outcome of the intergovernmental process. We are confident that with a renewed and enhanced commitment, that time frame is not only realistic but achievable. The draft text also requests the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive and detailed cost assessment to provide background context to support the intergovernmental process by 15 November, based on, but not limited to, the report of the co-facilitators. The adoption of the procedural draft resolution by consensus will, we hope, pave the way for further deliberations of elements for a substantive outcome of the intergovernmental process at the present session.

On behalf of Iceland and Indonesia, we wish to reiterate our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all delegations for their support to us as we fulfil our role as co-facilitators of that very important process.

**Mr. Mac-Donald** (Suriname): As this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor during the sixty-eighth session, let me warmly commend you, Sir, on your election as President of this body, as well as to assure you of Suriname's full support to you and your team.

I have the honour to address the Assembly today on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the adoption of the draft resolution on the extension of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system (A/68/L.3).

At the outset, allow me to acknowledge the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Desra Percaya, and the Permanent Representative of Iceland, Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir, and their teams for their skilful leadership of the intergovernmental process and for their hard work throughout the deliberations they facilitated and in ensuring that the relevant documentation was always prepared for our consideration.

CARICOM welcomed the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, pursuant to resolution 66/254. Our Member States have participated actively and constructively throughout the process. It is fundamental for Member States to address the serious challenges with which the human rights treaty body system is faced and to make concrete proposals to guarantee the effective functioning of the treaty bodies. Strengthening the system in all its aspects will contribute not only to an improvement of the system but also to safeguarding the basic tenets of human rights.

We regret, however, that we were unable to conclude negotiations in the time allocated due in part to the lack of information and concrete figures on crucial matters. The consideration in the intergovernmental process of strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty body system provided a useful and much needed opportunity for all Member States and other stakeholders to seriously address the challenges faced by the system, due, among other factors, to the increased ratification of treaties and the adoption of additional human rights treaties with the associated need for increased financial and other resources.

In addressing the challenges for States parties, it is crucial, in particular, for small States like those in the Caribbean, to build national capacity in order to fulfil their reporting obligations. While mechanisms responsible for human rights reporting are in place in our States, limited human and financial capacity compromises our ability to present national reports within the time frames established in the treaties to which our countries are parties.

Throughout the process, CARICOM has repeatedly stressed the importance of the inclusion of appropriate provisions for capacity-building in the outcome of our discussions. On those occasions, the region also requested concrete information on elements for a capacity-building strategy and how that strategy would be financed.

We take note of paragraph 4 of the draft resolution regarding the mandate given to the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive and detailed cost assessment by 15 November. In that regard, CARICOM would like to stress that every effort should be made by the Secretariat to provide Member States with all of the information requested to drive the remainder of the process. Failure to do so will lead to continued deferral of the finalization of the intergovernmental process and

would surely further compromise the functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

In closing, I would like to pledge the support of the Member States of CARICOM and their continued constructive participation in this process.

**Mr. Seger** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the co-facilitators for their tireless efforts since the start of their mandate. We are disappointed, however, that the intergovernmental process could not be concluded during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, since there were plenty of opportunities to discuss issues in an in-depth manner. It is time now for the General Assembly to shoulder its responsibilities with respect to the human rights treaty body system and to take the necessary decisions in line with its authority under the Charter.

Switzerland has made important concessions to join the consensus on draft resolution A/68/L.3. Therefore, we expect other delegations to show the same willingness to compromise in the last stage of the intergovernmental process on strengthening the treaty body system. Switzerland is concerned at the turn that the substantive discussions have taken and recalls that the goal of the process is to strengthen the United Nations system for the promotion and protection of human rights as a whole, and more specifically the treaty body system. Just as they have done thus far, the treaty bodies are carrying out substantial work within the universal system of human rights as credible oversight bodies for human rights treaties.

However, Switzerland is convinced that the treaty bodies can and must become more efficient in order to successfully overcome challenges and problems in terms of current and future capacity. Treaty bodies arise from various human rights treaties, which define, among other things, the treaty bodies' mandate and level of independence. The independence and expertise of treaty bodies are at the heart of the United Nations system of human rights, and Switzerland will continue to strongly defend this independence. In this context, we recall that there is no place for a political document aimed at restricting the independence of treaty body members and establishing an accountability mechanism, whether it be political or legal in nature.

(*spoke English*)

Since I had to strike a sober note twice, allow me briefly to take this opportunity to change to a lighter note and remind delegations that my Mission is organizing, at 2 p.m. today, a brass band concert in the rose garden, behind the North Lawn building. Let us start this session of the General Assembly on a lighter note. Everyone is welcome, and access is through the North Lawn building. I apologize, Mr. President, for this little commercial, but I just wanted to take this opportunity.

**The President**: I thank the representative of Switzerland for the gravity of his statement and for ending on a lighter note.

**Mr. Sparber** (Liechtenstein): I take the floor to explain Liechtenstein's position on draft resolution A/68/L.3, extending the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. Liechtenstein joins the consensus on the draft resolution on the understanding that the General Assembly is willing to grant a final and limited extension to the intergovernmental process until February 2014 in order to conclude its work. Liechtenstein continues to work constructively towards a substantive outcome within that time frame, much as we are of the view that we could and should have reached that stage already by now. On that basis, the intergovernmental process should continue its work expeditiously and without interruption on the basis of the draft resolution annexed to the co-facilitators' report.

We therefore call upon you, Mr. President, to swiftly respond to the provision contained in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. We also expect the Secretariat to live up to its responsibility and deliver a detailed statement on the financial implications of the draft resolution annexed to the co-facilitators' report until 15 November 2013 in order to allow the intergovernmental process to come to an informed conclusion. Until then, Liechtenstein will consider any requests of individual treaty bodies for additional funds independently of the intergovernmental process and solely on the basis of their merits.

**The President**: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.3, entitled "Extension of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system". May I take

it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.3?

*Draft resolution A/68/L.3 was adopted* (resolution 68/2).

**The President**: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Iliichev** (Russian Federation): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the cross-regional group, which includes the following States: Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nicaragua, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, the Russian Federation.

We have joined the consensus on the adoption of resolution 68/2, entitled "Extension of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system", and we are satisfied that its text is fully in line with the provisions of the founding resolution on the subject, namely resolution 66/254.

The cross-regional group attaches great importance to the goal of strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. We have been and continue to be committed to a constructive dialogue and fruitful negotiations aimed at reaching a successful consensus outcome of the intergovernmental process established in accordance with resolution 66/254. The group is convinced that the end result of the process should contribute to consolidating the capacity of the human rights treaty body system to fulfil its principal task under the relevant international treaties, namely, to assist States parties in implementing their obligations in accordance with the respective human rights instruments.

During the sixty-seventh session, we had numerous rounds of consultations on the issue of strengthening the treaty body system. The course of the discussion within the framework of the intergovernmental process made it absolutely evident that the scope of the problems regarding the functioning of the treaty body system is deeper and more complex than it seemed before we started this process. The "way forward" document produced by the co-facilitators provides a useful overview of how they assess the current state of negotiations. We believe that this document should be treated as purely a vision of the two co-facilitators, since it does not reflect the views of all Member States and in some places goes beyond the discussion we had.

The state of consultations clearly indicates that, for now, it is absolutely impossible to reach a consensus on all issues related to the functioning of the treaty body system.

Moreover, the cross-regional group has emphasized several times that it is premature to consider the issue of underfunding as the main challenge for the functioning of the treaty body system. The root causes of the treaty bodies' problems are deeper and the lack of funding is only one of them. No doubt, there is a need to improve the financing of the treaty bodies, but this should be done only on the basis of a comprehensive assessment of their needs. Therefore, we welcome the relevant provisions of the resolution that was just adopted regarding the specific request to the Secretary-General to provide a detailed cost assessment report.

As we mentioned during the intergovernmental process, there is a need to continue our discussions on the whole range of issues regarding the intergovernmental process. Consequently, more time is required so that we can reach agreement on how to strengthen the system, and as a result there should be one single package outcome/decision, rather than case-by-case ad hoc fixes. Bearing this in mind, we consider it important to extend the intergovernmental process.

At the same time, we would like to express our doubts regarding the deadline of the first half of February 2014 for the finalization of the elaboration of an outcome of this process, as set out in the resolution. In our understanding, the determining factor should be a meaningful outcome, not an artificial time line.

The cross-regional group would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere and profound appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session and to the members of his staff who have been engaged in the intergovernmental process, and especially to the two co-facilitators, Ambassadors Gréta Gunnarsdóttir and Desra Percaya, for all their efforts and hard work throughout the entire process. We look forward to their re-appointment by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

**Ms. Hewanpola** (Australia): Australia would like to begin by thanking the previous co-facilitators of the

intergovernmental process, the Ambassadors of Iceland and Indonesia, for their tireless efforts and commitment over an extended period to driving this process aimed at strengthening the human rights treaty body system. It has been no mean feat.

Australia remains deeply committed to working to strengthen the human rights treaty body system. As the system is a fundamental international mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights globally, it is clear to us that enhancing its effective functioning is critical. In that regard, it is imperative that we arrive at a timely outcome to this process that ensures that the treaty body system is able to benefit fully from the measures and efficiencies that we continue to discuss.

Australia regrets that we were unable to finalize a substantive, comprehensive outcome during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. In adopting resolution 66/295 last year extending the intergovernmental process to the sixty-seventh session, we had hoped, as that resolution had set out, that we would be have been able to identify and agree on concrete and sustainable measures to strengthen and enhance the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system during that session.

Indeed, having accepted the need for a short extension to the process to enable a comprehensive outcome, it was regrettable that this could not be agreed on during the sixty-seventh session itself.

Australia looks forward to engaging constructively with all States when the final phase of the intergovernmental process convenes, in 2014, to agree a final substantive outcome that can strengthen the treaty body system, improve States' compliance and implementation of the relevant recommendations and enhance peoples' realization of their human rights.

We look forward to an outcome that continues to be informed by the valuable experiences and contributions of the treaty body experts and civil society organizations and which preserves fundamentally the independence of the treaty body system and its experts, and we look forward to receiving in the meantime the comprehensive cost assessment of proposals to help guide our discussions. We thank the Secretariat for their efforts to meet this additional workload by 15 November and from within existing resources.

**Ms. Sage** (New Zealand): New Zealand joins the consensus on resolution 68/2 but regrets that we were not able to conclude the intergovernmental process during the sixty-seventh session.

We believe that the draft text annexed to the co-facilitators' report presents a good package of measures to ensure a robust and effective treaty body system. New Zealand is particularly pleased with the measures that reduce the reporting burden on States. That is very important for small States. These measures are not complex or expensive; they are practical and simple. These, along with capacity-building, resourcing and a raft of other measures, will help achieve the better implementation of treaties, an overarching goal of this process.

We want to take this opportunity to recognize the tireless efforts of the co-facilitators throughout this process and to thank them for the resolution. While it is not the outcome we had hoped for, we understand that Member States need time to ensure that we do this process justice and to agree to a comprehensive and sustainable package.

New Zealand looks forward to this final phase of negotiations. We should use this time that we now have to strengthen the text annexed to the co-facilitators' report, with the clear understanding that in February 2014 we will be concluding this process and have a substantive outcome.

**Ms. Robl** (United States of America): My delegation would first like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Indonesia and their teams for their continued dedication to an issue of tremendous importance.

The United States believes that treaty bodies play a critical role in assisting States in the implementation of their obligations under the human rights treaties to which they are a party, as well as holding States accountable in that regard. We have stressed this view throughout negotiations on this subject.

As we seek to identify the elements of a substantive resolution in the next round of negotiations, the United States would like to reiterate the importance of preserving the independence of the treaty bodies. Furthermore, civil society, national human rights institutions and other actors provide vital sources of information to the treaty bodies, and those voices deserve to be heard and respected.

The United States looks forward to receiving and analysing the comprehensive and detailed cost

assessment from the Secretary-General in November. That report will be essential to our negotiations scheduled for early next year.

Individual treaty bodies, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the States participating in this intergovernmental process all have made laudable efforts to advance the discussion on how to strengthen the human rights treaty body system. With the extension of the intergovernmental process, we seek a substantive resolution that addresses the myriad challenges facing the treaty body system in as comprehensive a manner as possible.

We look forward to continuing to work with our partners to strengthen the treaty body system, thereby significantly improving the international promotion and protection of human rights.

**Mr. Hasbún** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to convey to you the congratulations of our regional group, Mr. President, on your presiding over the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of our negotiating group, composed of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and my own country, El Salvador.

At the outset, we would like to thank the co-facilitators, the representatives of Indonesia and Iceland, for their work throughout the entire process. With regard to resolution 68/2, which we have just adopted, we would like to make the following comments.

Our Latin American group of like-minded States has since the outset been committed to the process of strengthening the human rights treaty bodies. Over the past two years of negotiations, we have put forward constructive proposals aimed at aligning the different positions and having the primary objective of finding viable solutions to reverse the critical situation that the treaty bodies are now experiencing.

At the same time, we would like to underscore the importance that our groups attached to agreement on a substantive resolution at the session that ended recently, that is, the sixty-seventh session.

We are surprised that, regrettably, after such lengthy negotiations, there remain difficulties in and resistance to finding comprehensive and sustainable solutions in the context of a process that is the responsibility of all. During this and previous preparatory processes, we discussed all of the relevant issues at length and considered the report of the co-facilitators, which reflects the significant progress we made in the negotiations as well as all of the elements required to bring this process to an end.

As was pointed out recently by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the opening of the most recent session of the Human Rights Council, independent and periodic review by United Nations treaty bodies is of key importance to the international community, not only to provide early warning of emerging human rights crises, but also, and above all, to support robust national systems, which represent the first line of defence in terms of averting such crises and which require sufficient resources in order to function.

The treaty system is at a critical juncture, and we need urgent solutions, including the necessary financing, which will be included in the Organization's budget for the 2014-2015 biennium, according to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Our group has joined the consensus in adopting this resolution in a new display of flexibility and with the understanding, as other colleagues who spoke before me have said, that this process will end ultimately in February 2014, at which time we will have effective solutions for the treaty bodies and clarify issues related to funding and capacity-building, which are of great importance for our group. We will base ourselves for that purpose on all of the work that has already been done, which is reflected in the report of the co-facilitators and in the elements of the future resolution that we hope to see adopted in this very Hall in a few months.

**The President**: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Ms. Kaljulate** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. I take the floor in explanation of position following the adoption of resolution 68/2, entitled "Extension of the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system".

Over the previous two sessions of the General Assembly, the European Union, together with all

delegations, has engaged in the Assembly's discussions on strengthening the human rights treaty body system. We have done so with the objective of ensuring an improved situation for rights holders on the ground in addressing the pressing challenges facing the treaty bodies. We therefore welcomed the goal set by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/295 to continue discussions during its sixty-seventh session with a view to considering a concrete outcome containing sustainable measures to address the situation, and we thank the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Indonesia and their teams, for their tireless work in that regard.

We engaged actively and constructively in the consultation process led by the co-facilitators with those goals in mind during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We note the numerous rounds of consultations held and the constructive contributions made by various groups, and welcome the progress made towards concrete solutions during those discussions. We also recall our strong commitment to and preference for reaching an outcome during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We strongly regret that this has not been possible, and we are yet again forced to consider an extension of the process instead of a substantive and tangible outcome.

We need a clear perspective for our work to bring this process to a successful conclusion, based on the progress made to date, as reflected in the elements for a draft resolution included in the co-facilitators' report (A/67/995). The EU has therefore agreed to the final extension of the process only on the clear understanding that our efforts will be focused on concluding the process and reaching concrete and sustainable outcomes by the first half of February 2014, the final end date for the process. We believe that the challenges the treaty bodies and States parties face are urgent, and we cannot agree to attempts to indefinitely prolong the General Assembly's consideration. We also believe that the General Assembly process should not serve as a means to block steps to strengthen the treaty bodies, which can be taken independently and immediately.

We note that the timeline is also crucial in ensuring compliance with established General Assembly procedures, considering the potential budgetary implications arising from the resolution. We call on the co-facilitators to ensure an organization of work and timetable that would allow for timely consideration of those implications by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

We value highly the work done by all delegations during the sixty-seventh session. We expect to build on the draft elements put forward by the co-facilitators in their report, which reflects the progress made towards consensus in our work until February.

Throughout all discussions, the EU has emphasized that the result of the process must strengthen the capacity of the treaty bodies to address the increased number of ratifications, and therefore reports, in a more timely and effective manner and provide for sustainability with regard to future developments. It should also lead to a higher level of compliance by the States parties with the reporting complications and a better implementation of the concluding observations. In that regard, the process should also lead to measures that help the States parties to meet their reporting obligations. We are therefore determined to reach an outcome that would address the crucial elements of cost savings and efficiency, resources and meeting time and capacity-building. We underline the importance of receiving an accurate, comprehensive and detailed cost assessment on those elements, as requested by the General Assembly in operative paragraph 4 in order to guide the delegations positions.

In going forward, we recall that the treaty body strengthening process must respect the competencies and autonomy of the various stakeholders, as reaffirmed by resolution 66/295. We also emphasize the continuing importance of the contributions and participation of all stakeholders, including treaty body experts and civil society.

We are committed to reaching a concrete outcome to that process by February 2014. We believe that this is necessitated by the pressing challenges facing the treaty bodies. We are convinced that this is a realistic goal, on the basis of the substantial work by all delegations to date. We also believe that proposals before us deserve to be considered by the General Assembly without further delay.

**The President**: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

*The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.*